

A Certain Sweet

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"HOW DARE YOU CRITICIZE MY METHODS! WHO'S THE GENIUS HERE? NOT YOU!"

Driba clamped his small hands to his Galvan ear holes. It had been a full day since Doctor Animo started ranting for apparently no reason within his cell. He would not stop. He was constantly fighting with his various imaginary friends in the form of patchwork stuffed toys. It never ceased to amaze Driba how the man could carry such bizarre extended conversations with himself. The doctor often acted like a large child. The jail sometimes felt more like a daycare than a prison to anyone involved with observing him. For an old man, he was incredibly immature.

"When that man throws a tantrum, he really throws a tantrum," Driba remarked.

"What did you say?" asked Blukic.

"I said, when Doctor Animo throws a trauma, he really throws a tantrum," Driba repeated more loudly.

Blukic stared at the fatter Galvan. "One more time. I didn't quite get it."

Driba cupped his hands around his mouth to amplify his words as much as possible before he shouted. "I SAID, WHEN DOCTOR ANIMO THROWS A TANTRUM, HE REALLY THROWS A TANTRUM!"

Blukic's expression appeared dull until he pulled cotton balls from his ear holes. "What was that? I couldn't hear you. I had these cotton balls in my ears to block out the ruckus from Doctor Animo."

"I SAID," Driba began before he groaned. He shook his head. "Oh, never mind."

"He's been yelling all night long," said Blukic.

"And all day long," said Driba until he jumped down from his seat at the console. "We've got to do something to quiet him down before the other prisoners incite a riot from being forced to listen to his endless tirade."

"Or the night shift incites one," Blukic noted. "They also have to listen to it."

The many employees of Plumber's HQ had to deal with the prisoners' unruliness. Doctor Animo always ranted the loudest and was hard to control without certain methods. Driba nodded. He folded his arms across his chest while continuing to nod in agreement with Blukic.

"He's such a baby!" Driba said until rubbed his chin while he pondered. "Then again, we might be able to use the doctor's immaturity to our advantage."

"How so?" asked Blukic.

Driba gestured at his partner. "Simple. How do exhausted adults get tantruming children to behave again?"

Blukic shrugged. "A spanking?"

Driba shook his head. "No, I mean non-violent methods."

"That's good. I don't want to have a mental image of Doctor Animo getting spanked burned into my brain," said Blukic.

"The answer is they give them a treat," Driba informed.

"Why should we give Doctor Animo a treat for throwing a tantrum?" Blukic questioned.

"Because any other options will most likely make him even more loud and rebellious!" said Driba. "The last thing we want to do is have him throw a larger tantrum for a longer period of time."

Blukic nodded. "Oh. Sounds logical." He scratched his head. "But don't children who throw tantrums also eventually exhaust themselves and fall asleep? Why don't we just wait for him to tire himself out?"

"Because that could take ages, and we're already tired of listening to him!" Driba reminded him.

"Oh, right," Blukic said. "But what kind of treat do we give him to make him calm down?"

"We discover what he wants more than anything, and then let him have it when he promises to be quiet," said Driba. "I'll bring up the database. Then we can scour his data until we piece together what he might enjoy."

Driba was busy staring at the monitor as he typed at the console.

"Why don't we just ask him what he likes the best," said Blukic until he departed.

"That's absurd. The villain won't just tell you what you can use to silence him, Blukic!" said Driba until he turned his head. He noted that Blukic was gone. "Blukic?"

At Doctor Animo's jail cell, Blukic began knocking on the see-through door. Doctor Animo was ranting within the cell. He turned his head and glared at the small Galvan.

"What do you want, you infuriating amphibian?" Doctor Animo snarled at the intrusive pest.

The tall, thin, ironically dimwitted Galvan was the source of his current constant rage. The Galvan member of tech support had thwarted his brilliant plan when he devoured his Techno Bug in an instant before it could hack the Plumber's security files.

"What's your favorite treat?" asked Blukic.

Doctor Animo was confused for a minute. He wondered why the annoying alien questioned him in such a way. He grew suspicious of the alien's motives almost immediately. "What? Why do you want to know that? And why should I tell you?"

"Because if you stop yelling and be good, we'll get it for you."

"BLUKIC!"

Driba ran up until he attempted to tackle Blukic before he revealed the plan, but fell on his face. Blukic had already revealed everything to Doctor Animo.

"Now we have no leverage," Driba whined.

"You'll never silence this genius, you diminutive alien frog," said Doctor Animo before he turned his back on the Galvans.

"Well then, if you don't want a special treat, never mind," said Blukic sarcastically until he was about to depart. "But I'm not going to ask again." He began to take slow, deliberate steps.

"Wait," Doctor Animo said until he moved to the door and stood behind it. Curiosity had gotten the better of him. "I'll tell you my favorite treat, but there's no way you'll ever be able to get it." He grinned. He looked sinister as usual while he remarked to the Galvans. "So I'll never be made to stop complaining."

"But what if we do get it?" asked Blukic.

Doctor Animo laughed. He shook his head. "Very well. I'll play along," he muttered under his breath before he resumed speaking to the skinny Galvan. "If you get the unobtainable treat, I promise never to cause a disturbance again."

"Deal," Blukic said happily.

"Fine. My favorite treat is," Doctor Animo crouched down and whispered it through the door to Blukic until Blukic nodded.

"Ooh, it sounds tasty. Let's go, Driba." He began to depart.

"Blukic? What did he say?" Driba asked until Blukic pulled him by the hand.

30 minutes passed before the two Galvans returned to Doctor Animo's cell. Blukic held a box. Driba looked exhausted.

"Now, Animo, here's your treat. So please quiet down. Forever!" Driba said as he opened the box.

Doctor Animo approached the door until he stood behind it. The Galvan took items out of the box and placed them on a tray. The tray was pushed through the food slot in the bottom of the door. Doctor Animo viewed the tray until he gasped.

"But that's impossible! These snacks went out of production in the 1960s!"

He picked up one of the packages of Barton's Famous brand strawberry-vanilla frosted animal crackers with chocolate filling. His eyes focused on the plump and mustachioed cartoon circus ringmaster who served as Barton's Famous animal crackers mascot. The man grinned as he tamed a lion while proclaiming how the consumer would "Roar with delight" over the delectable cookies. Doctor Animo recalled how much he loved the treats in his youth many years prior.

"How did you obtain them?" Doctor Animo inquired as he opened the packaging to see inside. He found the cookies to be as fresh as the day they were manufactured. Again, his eyes widened in disbelief. "They're perfectly preserved as well?"

"There's many varieties of human food that aliens living on this planet came to love as much as any human," Blukic explained. "Some of them developed advanced preservation technologies when the humans stopped manufacturing the goods."

"In this case, some of them also developed cloning methods to reproduce snacks that had gone off the market for decades. Quite a few alien species have a large sweet tooth," Driba said. "Price inflation on these items would be unbelievable if not for that. Lucky us!"

"Yeah. These cost two taydens," said Blukic. "As opposed to half a million human dollars per box."

Driba placed his hands over Blukic's mouth. Fortunately, Doctor Animo wasn't paying the Galvans any more attention. He continued to focus

on his beloved childhood treat.

"My mother used to purchase these for me as a special treat. She'd give them to me when I became upset," Doctor Animo muttered to himself as he reminisced his past while smiling fondly.

He removed a cookie from the package and savored its sweet scent before he bit into it. The intense flavor hit his tongue. It was entirely unchanged from his childhood. The taste brought him a huge amount of nostalgia as well as comfort. He happily chewed until he swallowed.

"There's no way I could ever stay mad after eating these cookies," Doctor Animo thought until he became involuntarily placated.

"Do you promise to behave now?" Blukic asked the jailed villain.

Doctor Animo's annoyance with the two Galvans and his desire to seek revenge on the Plumbers as well as Ben Tennyson had drained significantly. His anger at his imaginary colleges who now rested in various pieces on the floor of his jail cell had also vanished. He had no desire to cause trouble at the moment, and perhaps for a much longer while. It wasn't often that he felt so relaxed. The experience was oddly pleasant in a way. He pulled another cookie from the package before he glanced at the two Galvans.

"Oh, very well. I'll be quiet." He walked over to his bed until he sat down and resumed slowly consuming his cookies.

"Thank goodness," said Driba. He wiped his forehead. "It worked!"

The two Galvans went back to their work in peace. Driba sighed with relief as he enjoyed the quiet. Until Blukic began speaking.

"Wait. Maybe we should ask him if he wants some milk to go with the cookies," said Blukic until Driba jokingly put a piece of tape over his mouth.

The End

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file.